United Nations A/56/886–S/2002/302

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
25 March 2002

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 166
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 22 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to the latest deadly incident of Palestinian terrorism that occurred yesterday in Jerusalem.

At approximately 4.20 p.m. (local time), a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up in the middle of a crowded shopping district on King George Street in the heart of Jerusalem. The explosives strapped to the bomber's waist were packed with nails to inflict maximum carnage. It was the second suicide bombing in Israel in as many days, and the second one in Jerusalem in less than a week. Three Israelis — a couple, Gadi and Tzipi Shemesh, and Yitzhak Cohen, age 42 — were killed in the attack, and 87 others were wounded. The bomber was identified as Mohammed Hashaikeh, a Palestinian who was arrested in mid-February by the Palestinian security services on suspicion of planning to carry out a terrorist attack in Israel; he was released several days later. The Al Aksa Brigades, the terrorist arm of Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fatah, took responsibility for the attack. We note that the United States Department of State has taken the appropriate action in placing the Al Aksa Brigades on its list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

This attack is the latest incident in the continuing campaign of Palestinian terrorism directed against the citizens of the State of Israel. Previous attacks have been detailed in my letters dated 18 March 2002 (A/56/880-S/2002/293), 14 March 2002 (A/56/876-S/2002/280), 11 March 2002 (A/56/867-S/2002/257), 8 March 2002 (A/56/864-S/2002/252), 5 March 2002 (A/56/857-S/2002/233), 4 March 2002 (A/56/854-S/2002/222), 27 February 2002 (A/56/843-S/2002/208), 20 February 2002 (A/56/828-S/2002/185), 19 February 2002 (A/56/824-S/2002/174), 11 February 2002 (A/56/819-S/2002/164), 8 February 2002 (A/56/814-S/2002/155), 28 January 2002 (A/56/798-S/2002/126), 22 January 2002 (A/56/788-S/2002/104), 18 January 2002 (A/56/781-S/2002/86), 16 January 2002 (A/56/774-S/2002/73), 11 January 2002 (A/56/771-S/2002/47), 4 January 2002 (A/56/766-S/2002/25), 13 December 2001 (A/56/706-S/2001/1198), 4 December 2001 (A/56/678-S/2001/1150), 30 November 2001 (A/56/670-S/2001/1141), 27 November 2001 (A/56/663-S/2001/1121), 12 November 2001 (A/56/617-S/2001/1071), 5 November 2001 (A/56/604-S/2001/1048),

02-30090 (E) 250302

24 October 2001 (A/56/506-S/2001/1011), 19 October 2001 (A/56/492-S/2001/990), 17 October 2001 (A/56/483-S/2001/975), 8 October 2001 (A/56/450-S/2001/948), 5 October 2001 (A/56/444-S/2001/943), 3 October 2001 (A/56/438-S/2001/938), 24 September 2001 (A/56/406-S/2001/907), 20 September 2001 (A/56/386-S/2001/892), 17 September 2001 (A/56/367-S/2001/875), 7 September 2001 (A/56/346-S/2001/858), 4 September 2001 (A/56/331-S/2001/840), 30 August 2001 (A/56/325-S/2001/834), 27 August 2001 (A/56/324-S/2001/825), 13 August 2001 (A/56/294-S/2001/787), 9 August 2001 (A/56/286-S/2001/780), 8 August 2001 (A/56/280-S/2001/775), 6 August 2001 (A/56/272-S/2001/768), 27 July 2001 (A/56/225-S/2001/743), 26 July 2001 (A/56/223-S/2001/737), 17 July 2001 (A/56/201-S/2001/706), 13 July 2001 (A/56/184-S/2001/696), 3 July 2001 (A/56/138-S/2001/662), 2 July 2001 (A/56/131-S/2001/656), 21 June 2001 (A/56/119-S/2001/619), 19 June 2001 (A/56/98-S/2001/611), 18 June 2001 (A/56/97-S/2001/604), 13 June 2001 (A/56/92-S/2001/585), 11 June 2001 (A/56/91-S/2001/580), 4 June 2001 (A/56/85-S/2001/555), 30 May 2001 (A/56/81-S/2001/540), 25 May 2001 (A/56/80-S/2001/524), 18 May 2001 (A/56/78-S/2001/506), 11 May 2001 (A/56/72-S/2001/473), 9 May 2001 (A/56/69-S/2001/459), 1 May 2001 (A/55/924-S/2001/435), 23 April 2001 (A/55/910-S/2001/396), 16 April 2001 (A/55/901-S/2001/364), 28 March 2001 (A/55/863-S/2001/291), 27 March 2001 (A/55/860-S/2001/280), 26 March 2001 (A/55/858-S/2001/278), 19 March 2001 (A/55/842-S/2001/244), 5 March 2001 (A/55/821-S/2001/193), 2 March 2001 (A/55/819-S/2001/187), 14 February 2001 (A/55/787-S/2001/137), 13 February 2001 (A/55/781-S/2001/132), 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-S/2001/103), 25 January 2001 (A/55/748-S/2001/81), 23 January 2001 (A/55/742-S/2001/71), 28 December 2000 (A/55/719-S/2000/1252), 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114), 20 November 2000 (A/55/634-S/2000/1108) and 2 November 2000 (A/55/540-S/2000/1065).

The State of Israel holds the Palestinian Authority and its Chairman, Yasser Arafat, directly responsible for this attack, which was perpetrated by terrorists under the authority of Chairman Arafat's Fatah faction. More generally, the Palestinian leadership has used its official media apparatus to deliberately foster a climate of hatred and violence against Israelis and has refused to abide by its obligations to prevent acts of terror that emanate from the territory under its control. In particular, the Palestinian leadership has failed to end its "revolving door" policy of arresting terrorists and subsequently releasing them; terrorists must be arrested and they must remain incarcerated.

Moreover, this attack comes as the two sides were supposedly moving towards a ceasefire agreement with the assistance of the American special envoy, General Anthony Zinni. We had hoped that the renewed involvement of the United States would have moved Chairman Arafat to take serious actions to control terrorism. The events of the last several days bear tragic witness to the fact that he has abjectly failed to do so.

Israel reaffirms its commitment to negotiating a peaceful settlement to the conflict in our region, but reserves its right to take necessary and proportionate actions to defend its citizens in the absence of even minimal anti-terrorist measures taken by the Palestinian Authority. Nevertheless, Israel is exercising restraint in order to give our efforts at achieving a ceasefire a chance to succeed. Israel has dropped its requirement for seven days of quiet, agreed to conduct truce negotiations while under fire, lifted travel restrictions on Chairman Arafat, stopped conducting air raids and withdrawn forces from Area A. But Israel cannot be the only party to act. It is

imperative that the Palestinian leadership demonstrate its commitment to fighting terror, to ending the violence and to progressing to the series of steps outlined in the Mitchell report and the Tenet understanding that outline a pathway back from the abyss of conflict to the process of dialogue and negotiations.

Our efforts to restore calm to the region will be fruitless so long as terrorism is perceived by the Palestinian side as a legitimate means to address their political grievances. The international community must make clear that such tactics are absolutely unacceptable and resolve that those who resort to such tactics will not be granted the mantle of international legitimacy.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative